

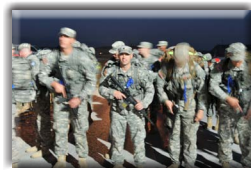
Volume XV Issue 8
September 2012



the GUARDIAN

The official magazine of Multinational Battle Group East

WHAT'S INSIDE



MNBE E NCO/SOLDIER OF THE ROTATION
PAGES 5 & 6



TAKING COMBATIVES TO THE NEXT LEVEL
PAGES 7 & 8



REINFORCING THE BASICS
PAGE 9



LEGAL TIPS FOR RETURNING SOLDIERS
PAGES 11 & 12



WISCONSIN GOVERNOR VISITS KOSOVO
PAGES 13



SOFTBALL LEAGUE WRAPS UP
PAGE 17

the GUARDIAN

The Guardian is produced for personnel of Multinational Battle Group - East, and is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense.

Contents of the publication are not necessarily the official views of the United Nations, U.S. government, the Department of the Army, Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, or MNBE E.



Commanding Officer
Col. Jeffrey J. Liethen

Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj.
Bradley J. Shields

Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Joy Staab

172nd Public Affairs Detachment
Editor/Layout & Design
Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

Broadcast Journalists
Staff Sgt. Jason Alvarez
Sgt. Nathan Rivard

Print Journalist
Spc. Joshua Barnett

ABOUT THE COVER

Spc. Kyle Black, US COY, reads a roadmap in the pre-dawn hours just prior to a ruck march, Aug. 21, 2012, during the Soldier of the Rotation board. See more photos and story on Pages 5 & 6.

(U.S. Army photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner)

FROM THE COMMANDER

Congratulations on a Job Well Done, KFOR15

Our time as members of the Multi-National Battle Group – East is quickly coming to an end, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the important role you played during our successful deployment to Kosovo, and congratulate all of you for a job well done.

Each of you should feel extremely proud of everything we have accomplished this year, and let it be known that every individual Soldier in our Battle Group contributed to our success.

Our mission could not have been accomplished without a cohesive team effort.

Our myriad accomplishments have been extraordinary, and the experience we've gained has developed us professionally. The credibility we've earned as combat zone veterans cannot be duplicated by any other means.

When you return home, take what you've learned and use it to enhance the capabilities of the military formations back in your state. We owe that to the future generations of our brothers and sisters in arms that will deploy overseas to do our nation's business.

Additionally, when you return home and begin to reintegrate into civilian life, I ask that you be safe

and use good judgment.

Assess risks before you take them and remember that resources are available if you need them. During our time in Kosovo you and your loved ones have changed, and there are numerous veterans' support services available to you to help adjust to those changes.



Col. Jeffrey J. Liethen
MNBG E Commander

Don't hesitate to reach out and utilize these services or turn to one of your comrades for support if you need it.

In closing, I must reiterate that congratulations are in order for a job well done throughout this deployment.

I believe I can speak for a proud and grateful nation by thanking you for your exemplary service, and your families for their great sacrifices. It has been an honor for me to serve with you, and to make history as your teammate while "Leading from the Edge".

THE END

MNBG EAST MEETS WEST

Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E), based out of Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, met MNBG West (MNBG W) in a volleyball showdown at the Kosovo Force (KFOR) 2nd Bi-annual Beach Volleyball Tournament in Pristina, Kosovo, Aug. 26, 2012. The tournament brings commanders and soldiers of the various multinational units together in friendly competition. MNBG E, led by U.S. Army Col. Jeffrey J. Liethen, battle group commander, and made up of U.S. and Ukrainian Soldiers, was not enough to defeat the Italian forces of MNBG W, losing the best-of-three match in a close-fought battle. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner)



CSM CORNER

STAY FOCUSED, KEEP SAFETY IN MIND

Nearly a year ago our Title 10 adventure began at Camp Atterbury, Ind. (CAIN), where we trained and prepared ourselves for our mission in Kosovo. Many months of planning and preparation preceded our arrival at CAIN and once again we are preparing for our arrival at CAIN, but this time as the final phase of our deployment before returning home.

As a Battle Group we have learned and grown in our leadership roles. We spent our deployment making a difference in Kosovo and the Balkans region. We were part of something much bigger than us, and made a significant contribution collectively as a Battle Group.

Our community involvement providing English-language classes and softball lessons for the children has made a positive impact on their lives. We have worked with and developed relationships with our multi-national partners. We have shared stories and customs from our countries to help understand cultural differences, and found a common bond serving in the Armed Forces.

We operated jointly as a NATO force to provide a safe and secure environment for all the people of Kosovo, as one Battle Group. We do not always have the option to select our next mission, but we do control what we do with that opportunity. We had both military and civilian educational opportunities here and those who took advantage help position themselves for future advancement.

As the years go by, your memories of this deployment will fade and faces will disappear, so I

encourage you to look back at your deployment book and video and share stories and memories with your family from time to time; be proud of what you accomplished during this year of your life. Life will consume us when we return and we will all try to pick up where we left off. We will find that some things remain the same and others have changed, as have we.



Command Sgt. Maj.
Bradley J. Shields
MNBG E CSM

The challenges of reintegrating many times present themselves; a significant event in each of our lives as we turn the page and move to the next chapter in our lives. Take the opportunity to reflect, make necessary adjustments in your leadership toolbox and move forward.

I want to thank each of you for your individual contribution and sacrifice, and wish you great success at a smooth and seamless reintegration.

Our Families who have carried on without us, we are grateful for your support during the past year. You are the unsung heroes of the Army, and I thank you for what you do.

Good luck in your future endeavors. Thank you for your collective success and God Bless the United States of America.

Final KFOR15 WLC Class Graduates

The final class of Warrior Leader Course graduated at Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 7, 2012. The course teaches prospective non-commissioned officers (NCOs) on the tactical and technical skills needed to thrive in the NCO Corps. Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) graduated approximately 120 Soldiers in three classes the past 10 months. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joshua Barnett)



THE END

MNBG E SOLDIER/NCO OF THE ROTATION



Spc. Joshua Ludecke, LMT specialist, waits for the start of the ruck march, Aug. 21, 2012. Ludecke went on to win Soldier of the Rotation later that day.

SOLDIERS VIE FOR TOP HONORS AFTER FOUR-DAY SERIES OF EVENTS TESTING TACTICAL, TECHNICAL PROWESS IN THE FIELD & IN FRONT OF BOARD MEMBERS

story & photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) put forward the best of its junior enlisted and non-commissioned officer (NCO) force with Soldier and NCO of the Rotation boards conducted Aug. 18-21 at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.

NCO honors went to Staff Sgt. Matthew Eubank of the U.S. Contingent (U.S. COY), while Spc. Joshua Ludecke of the Liaison Monitoring Team (LMT) took Soldier of the Rotation honors.

Runners-up in the Soldier (E-4 and below) category were Spcs. Jason Cormier and Kyle Black of the U.S. COY; runners-up in the NCO (E-5 & E-6) category were Staff Sgt. Timothy Bailey from Task Force Aviation and Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Peets of the LMT.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Shields, MNBG E Command Sergeant Major, it was a very competitive board and he congratulated the efforts of all who participated, as well as their sponsors who helped ready them.

While the board itself is conducted to determine the best NCO and Soldier, the overall process is to make for a better-rounded member of the Army.

"We wanted the Soldiers walking away from the board learning something," Shields said. "It was designed so that no one task force within the battle group had an advantage - we had tactical, fitness and Army knowledge."

The Soldier and NCO of the Rotation board was a four-day affair, more akin to a mini-boot camp, with participants sleeping in separate housing during the event to focus exclusively on the competition.

Graded events included: an 8-mile ruck march, Army Physical Fitness Test, M-4 weapons qualification, Rules of Engagement (ROE) virtual shooter, written exam, Soldier/NCO Creed and personal appearance board.

Soldiers from the Georgia Army National Guard's

story continued on next Page



Spc. Brandon Graske, military policeman, fires at the virtual trainer during the rules of engagement portion of the Soldier of the Rotation competition, Aug. 19, 2012. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joshua Barnett)

continued from previous Page

3rd Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, came out on top of the competition; both Eubank and Ludecke hail from the state, while in all, Georgia soldiers took five of the six top spots as runners-up.

Ludecke said he was happy with his individual performance in the competition and had spent hours of study and effort with his sponsor to ensure a successful performance. While the events were such that every participant had a chance to take top honors, he was especially proud of the results that saw his home unit - Georgia Army National Guard's 3rd Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment - do so well.

"Being in the [3-108th CAV], we're a pretty prideful bunch," he said. "It meant a lot to us to be able to do so well at the board."

Lt. Col. Joseph Lynch, 3-108th CAV commander, said he and Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew Marks, 3-108 CAV command sergeant major, couldn't be more proud of the efforts of their Soldiers.

"Our Soldiers and NCOs continue to demonstrate that they are some of the most professional, disciplined and hard working Soldiers within the battle group," Lynch said. "I

think this demonstrates the quality leadership that we have in this unit, from the squad level to the squadron level. These Soldiers and NCOs have demonstrated the excellence and professionalism that is the reason there is a long list of Soldiers wanting to join the 3-108th Cavalry Squadron."

Shields said one of the key components of the board not normally seen was the E-4 performance evaluation and NCO Evaluation Report (NCOER) portion of the competition, which are core NCO responsibilities.

Soldiers were given a scenario and required to counsel and write an evaluation or NCOER based on that information. Writing an evaluation is a skill, he said, that is absolutely vital for the Army in the years to come, as the military draws down after more than a decade at war and tries to keep its best Soldiers.

"After this board, NCOs have a much better expectation of what they should expect in their NCOER and how they should prepare one for their Soldiers," Shields said. "They need to know what right looks like."

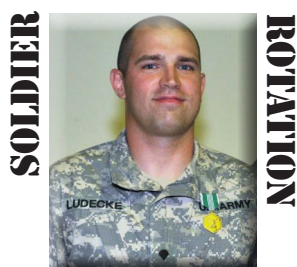
The competition was made up of 24 Soldiers from throughout MNBG E in Task Forces Medical, Aviation, and LMT, the U.S. COY and the Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC) element.



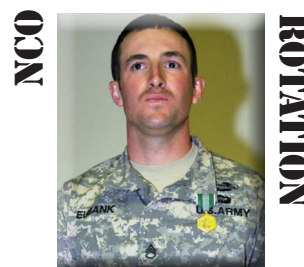
Sgt. Timothy Benjamin, network and signals operations NCO, reports to the board during NCO of the Rotation competition, Aug. 21, 2012.



Sgt. Terry Morris, a ground ambulance medic, assembles an M249 Squad Assault Weapon (SAW) during NCO of the Rotation competition at Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 20, 2012.



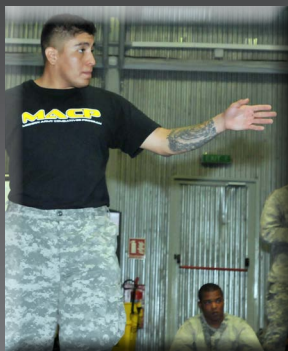
Spc. Joshua Ludecke
TF LMT



Staff Sgt. Matthew Eubank
U.S. COY

THE END

Talking Combatives to the Next Level



story & photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

Soldiers from Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) took their recently-earned combatives skills to the next level, participating in the Tactical Combatives Course (TCC) at Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 6-17.

The course is the second tier of instruction in the U.S. Army's Modern Army Combatives Program (MACP), which is designed to, "instill the Warrior Ethos and prepare Soldiers to close with and defeat the enemy in hand-to-hand combat," according to the school's Web site.

Several Basic Combatives Courses (BCC) - the first level of training - have been conducted at the MNBG E headquarters for the deployed Soldiers from 13 states in the Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves this deployment. BCC focuses on basic combatives moves to include grappling techniques like pummeling, strikes, clinching and scissor sweeps.

TCC takes the lessons learned from the basic course and incorporates them into more advanced situations that Soldiers may find themselves, whether in the field or back at home. Students learned skills such as subduing and handcuffing a potential assailant, and entering and clearing a room with one or more teams.

That tactical training is something that is fairly new for combatives instruction,

story continued on next Page



1st Lt. Christy Hanson, left, and Spc. Justin Sprewer, await their turn as aggressors during Combatives Level 2 training. INSET: Staff Sgt. Jair Cranmore, instructor, right, demonstrates a safe method for controlling an potential assailant.

according to U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jair Cranmore, combatives instructor. An instructor since 2008, he said recent changes to the program took the advanced course from just hand-to-hand instruction to more tactical-based scenarios appropriate for today's Soldier.

"A lot of the instruction in the past was advanced jiu-jitsu," he said. "Instead of teaching all that stuff you see on TV with [mixed martial arts], they're learning things they can use in the field or at home."

That's not to say they didn't also learn more advanced hand-to-hand combatives techniques. The course still features hand-to-hand maneuvers such as combo punches, leg sweeps, defense against headlocks or guillotines, and rolling with punches or slaps.

Added is instruction on clearing a room with one or more teams, and what to do when an adversary closes with a Soldier and they can't rely on their primary (M4) or secondary (pistol) weapons to resolve the situation.

1st Lt. Morio Riley, a patient administrative officer and medical regulating officer for the Balkans region at Task Force MED, said that as someone who has been a wrestler for more than 25 years, the course was physically demanding and worth the effort.

"It was very physical, and very tactical; it took me out of my comfort zone," he said. "As an officer and someone who works in the medical field, I don't get many opportunities to do Army training like this, so I take every opportunity I can get."

With both the BCC and TCC under their belts, the recent graduates have the chance to progress in the combatives track of instruction. The next two levels of instruction focus on refining their skills and becoming instructors for the next generation of combatives students, helping those Soldiers reach that next level of combatives experience.

"Take the knowledge you've received here and bring it home with you," said Sgt. 1st Class Danny Belisle, a brigade training NCO and one of the combatives instructors during the course, to students at the graduation ceremony following the course. "Don't keep it with you, you're now the experts and can provide this training to your units back home."



Spc. Darriel Thomas, a legal support specialist, left, is attacked during a room-clearing exercise.



Soldiers "zip-tie" an aggressor during training.



A student rushes through the door during room-clearing training.

Reinforcing the Basics



MNBG E Soldiers conduct CRC exercise with KFOR's riot control response experts

story by Spc. Joshua Barnett

KTM forces lob Molotov cocktails during a training demonstration at Camp Slim Lines, Kosovo, recently. (Courtesy photo)

Multinational Battle Group – East (MNBG E) Soldiers from the Georgia Army National Guard trained alongside personnel from the Kosovo Force (KFOR) Tactical Reserve Manoeuvre Battalion (KTM) during a recent series of exercises.

KTM is a task force made up primarily of Portuguese and Hungarian soldiers based at Camp Slim Lines in Pristina. They are KFOR's primary crowd & riot control (CRC) response force.

"They are really the tactical soldier element that you see as far as the crowd and riot control piece, and being able to react and keep things calm here in Kosovo," said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Kurt Zeitler, MNBG E plans & exercises NCOIC.

"We must be able to deploy within Kosovo in the MNBG E area of operations," said Portuguese Maj. Paulo Almeida, KTM operations officer. "We are the first layer reserves, the first responders."

The training took place over several days, and both at Camp Bondsteel and Camp Slim Lines.

"The whole US Coy came in and did individual techniques with them, showing each other the tactics and techniques that we would use to take care of a situation here in Kosovo," said Zeitler.

"We brought the KTM soldiers here, we had them going through our simulator here on Bondsteel as well," he added. "It was good mix for them to get to know each other right down to the soldier level and have some interactions."

2nd Lt. Michael Torre, a platoon leader with the U.S. COY, stressed the importance of this.



MNBG E Soldiers react to a Molotov cocktail thrown at their formation. (Courtesy photo)

story continued on next Page

"It's very important, for the familiarity of knowing who the leaders are, so I know who to go to right away, I know who to communicate with, and when you have that relationship already established before events happen it definitely makes things a lot easier," he said.

The exercises focused on soldiers from each country learning from each other. Each contingent demonstrated how they organize formations, how they move and how they react to contact, such as from a Molotov cocktail, said Almeida.

"We showed our way, then the U.S. COY showed



A platoon of MNBG E Soldiers, right, work as a team to repel aggressors during a training exercise. (Courtesy photo)

their way, so we could see what is the best way," Almeida said. "Now if we must deploy with the U.S. COY, we could work together. Not just work next to, but work with them. To train to work together, this is the most important."

Torre agreed, saying it is important seeing everything from a different perspective, and seeing how other militaries do everything. There are a lot of CRC techniques, he said, that both sides were able to use.

"I wish we had more opportunities to train with them," Torre said. "I know we're busy and they're busy, but it's definitely beneficial. A lot of the soldiers on both sides swapped patches and ranks to get little souvenirs from each other, we took a lot of pictures, it meant a lot to everybody."

THE END

Ukraine COY Celebrates 'Day of Airborne'



Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) Soldiers expecting a quiet and formal celebration by the Ukraine Congingent (COY) of one of their most important military holidays were quickly disabused of that notion earlier this month.

The Ukrainian COY celebrated their 'Day of Airborne Troops' at Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 2, 2012, replete with road flares, a frog-eating display, bottle-smashing and demonstrations of their tactical skills - not to mention their ability to withstand pain.

The celebration also included a ceremony and parade of troops in front of MNBG E officials.

The holiday commemorates the first Soviet airborne forces parachute jump, which took place, Aug. 2, 1930.

THE END



photos by Spc. Joshua Barnett

LEGAL CORNER

TIPS FOR CORRECTING ERRORS IN RECORDS

The Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) is the highest level of administrative review within the Department of the Army with the mission to correct errors in or remove injustices from Army military records.

Current and former members of the United States Army (including Army Reserve and Army National Guard) may apply for a correction of an error or injustice in their Army record. If the Soldier or veteran is deceased or incompetent, the next of kin or a legal representative may apply on his or her behalf.

Public law requires that an application be submitted within 3 years of the error or injustice or within 3 years after the applicant discovers the error or injustice.

Please note that the ABCMR may waive an untimely application if it determines that sufficient justification exists for the delay; however, an applicant should not assume a waiver will be granted.

How To Apply: An application to the ABCMR may be completed electronically at <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/abcmr-app.cfm> or by completing a DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Records) and mailing it along with supporting documentation to the ABCMR at the following address:

Army Review Boards Agency, Attn: Congressional and Special Actions Office, 1901 South Bell Street, Crystal Mall 4, Arlington, Virginia 22202-4508.

Along with the application, the applicant must include copies (not originals) of any evidence that may support their request. In addition, an applicant must include documentation showing that all administrative courses of action at lower levels of the Army have been exhausted.

For example, if you are submitting an application due to an evaluation report that is part of your military record which you believe contains errors or injustices, you must provide evidence that you exhausted all of your administrative remedies to include appealing the evaluation report in accordance with AR 623-3.

Simply put, the ABCMR will not address issues if administrative recourse/appeals in accordance with Army Regulations have not been exhausted.

ABCMR Process: The ABCMR will review the application as well as any evidence that accompanies

the application. If the ABCMR needs an advisory opinion from another agency, the ABCMR may make such a request. If it does, the ABCMR will in turn provide the applicant an opportunity to comment on the advisory opinion before further considering the application.

If an application cannot be resolved administratively, the ABCMR staff will prepare a brief for the Board's consideration.

The Board, in turn, will consider all evidence and render a final decision, which is binding on all Army officials and government organizations. When directed, corrections will be made to the record and related corrective actions will be taken by the responsible Army or government organization.

The ABCMR process may take up to 12 months from the date that your application is received. Applications are processed in the order in which they are received. An applicant will be notified by mail when a decision has been made.

Appeal: If new evidence becomes available which was not considered by the Board, an applicant can request reconsideration of a Board's decision with one year of the decision.

To summarize, the ABCMR is available to help clear your military record of errors and injustices. Their mission is not to erase records of negative conduct. Within 3 years of discovering the error or injustice, an applicant must provide sufficient evidence that an error or injustice occurred.

Furthermore, an applicant must provide evidence that all administrative remedies under the applicable Army Regulation have been exhausted.

If you feel that an error or injustice is contained in your military record, and are contemplating whether to submit an application to the ABCMR, please consult AR 15-185, the ABCMR Applications Guide posted at <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/abcmr-overview.cfm>, or the legal office.



Capt. Al Rohmeyer
Legal Assistance &
Claims Judge Advocate

LEGAL HELP AVAILABLE BACK HOME

story by Spc. Darriel Thomas
MNBG E Paralegal

gabar.org (Select "Public Service Opportunities" tab and then "Military Legal Assistance Program" link).

Throughout KFOR 15's deployment, the Camp Bondsteel Command Judge Advocate (CJA) office has been a resource for service-members in need of legal assistance. The legal assistance judge advocate and paralegal have assisted hundreds of clients with both military and civilian legal needs.

As the deployment comes to a close, the constant flow of personnel in need of legal assistance has remained steady. So, what happens when a service-member needs legal assistance but can no longer utilize the services of the CJA's office?

Most State Bar Associations have established programs specifically designed to help Servicemembers who need legal assistance but cannot afford it. Each state will do their best to provide pro bono (free) or reduced fee legal help for your legal problem.

Within each State Bar Association, there are different qualifications that must be met in order to take advantage of the program. To find out if you qualify, simply visit the websites listed below.

Wisconsin

The pro bono program in the State of Wisconsin is called "Legal Assistance for Military Personnel." For more information, visit www.wisbar.org (type "Wisconsin Legal Assistance for Military Personnel" into Bar website's search engine).

Georgia

The pro bono program in the State of Georgia is known as "State Bar of Georgia Legal Assistance to Military Program." For more information, visit www.

Tennessee

The pro bono program in the State of Tennessee is known as "Hometown Support." For more information, visit www.tba.org (type "Hometown Support" into bar website's search engine).

New Jersey

The pro bono program in the State of New Jersey is known as the "Military Legal Assistance Program." For more information, visit www.njsba.com (Select "Resources" tab) or call (888) 541-1900.

Wyoming

The pro bono program in the State of Wyoming is known as the "Pro Bono Volunteer Lawyers Program." For more information, visit www.wyomingbar.org (Select "Resources" tab, "Public Assistance" link, and then "Pro Bono Volunteer Lawyers Program" link.)

North Dakota

The pro bono program in the State of North Dakota is known as the "Volunteer Lawyers Program." For more information, visit www.legalassist.org (Select "Veterans Services" tab and then "Attorney Directory.")

For states not identified above, please visit your individual state's Bar Association website or visit www.americanbar.org (type "ABA Home Front" in ABA website's search engine) for additional resources available for military personnel and their families.

If anyone has any questions or comments, regarding this article or resources that may be available to Servicemembers, please contact the CJA Office at DSN x 5071.



FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/MNBG-E
FACEBOOK.COM/KFOR.MNBG.EAST
YOUTUBE.COM/MNBGEAST



WI GOVERNOR VISITS TROOPS, KOSOVO

story & photos by Spc. Joshua Barnett

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker personally thanked Army National Guard Soldiers from the Badger state for their overseas service keeping the peace in Kosovo during his first overseas visit as governor this week.

Walker, who as governor is the commander-in-chief of the Wisconsin National Guard, accompanied Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, on a troop visit to see and hear about the missions the approximately 200 deployed Wisconsin Soldiers performed during the past year as part of NATO's Operation Joint Guardian, a peacekeeping mission to ensure a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all residents of Kosovo.

"Thank you for your service," Walker told the troops, who are preparing to return to Wisconsin in the coming weeks. "You are part of a proud Wisconsin tradition, and too often we tend to take our freedoms for granted. You should feel very proud of what you've done collectively. I'm immensely proud of the job you've done here.

"It's amazing to me to see the multinational effort, and see the cohesiveness despite cultural and language barriers," Walker continued. "It is really impressive to see how efficiently things are run and how well it's run; it's a testament to the United States Armed Forces and there seems to be a lot of respect from the other multinational forces."

The deployed soldiers include members of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, the 32nd Combat Forward Military Police, as well as aviation elements Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, and Detachment 1, Company B, 248th Aviation Support Battalion. The 157th MEB served as the headquarters element for Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E), which is a U.S.-led battle group composed of soldiers from the Armenian, French, German, Greek, Moroccan, Polish, Romanian,

Turkish and Ukrainian armies.

"It is a very important mission that the 157th is leading," Dunbar said, "and very important for the governor and I to come on behalf of the people of Wisconsin and see the troops in action and be able to go back and talk to the families and employers and tell them what a great job they've been doing."

During the two-day visit Walker met with the Wisconsin soldiers at three military bases in Kosovo. They explained the roles they've played since arriving in country in November, 2011. Troops also shared stories of what they missed most during the deployment and what they're looking forward to when they get home, including meeting new babies, toasting the

Green Bay Packers with a cold beer, and deer hunting.

"We will welcome you when you get home but it is a pleasure to come over here and see what you do first-hand," Walker told some of the troops during his visit. "I'm proud of you."

Dunbar stressed that the year the Soldiers spent away from their homes and families was not for nothing.

"This mission mattered, to not only the United States of America, but to the people of Kosovo and the broader region," he said. The Wisconsin National Guard leadership - Colonel (Jeffrey J.) Liethen, Command Sgt. Maj. (Bradley J.) Shields, the officers and NCOs did a phenomenal job working with a multinational organization plus about ten other state's National Guards doing a great job keeping our commitment to this part of the world," Dunbar added.

The trip culminated when the governor traveled back to the U.S. with redeploying troops from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's aviation elements, who handed the mission over to their replacements Sept. 1.

"It's actually kind of exciting, to go back with the aviators," Walker said. "It's kind of a rush to be able to literally come back with some of them, and then be ready to welcome back the rest in a few weeks."



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker administers the oath of enlistment to deployed troops who re-enlisted during a ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Sept. 6, 2012.

SAFETY ROUNDUP

TIPS FOR SAFE SUMMERTIME SPORTS

I know at least a few of you are in the same situation as I am. Since I left home last year I have purchased a new motorcycle. Well, it's not new, but it's new to me, and that's the key.

When I get home I will not only be driving on roads that I have not driven on in more than a year, but I will be driving a motorcycle that I am completely unfamiliar with. This is also true for driving any vehicle you are unfamiliar with.

There have been multiple studies over the years on motorcycle accidents. The results are very consistent over time and have similar conclusions:

- The most common multiple-vehicle accident is caused by a car turning left in front of a motorcycle at an intersection – about two thirds of multiple-vehicle accidents.
- The most common single-vehicle motorcycle accident is running wide in a turn and leaving the road or sliding out – about one-third of single-vehicle accidents.
- In about 40% of motorcycle accidents, one of the contributing factors is the rider's inexperience or lack of skill to evade the accident.

A motorcycle is a powerful machine that can go to speeds above 100 miles per hour. Riding a motorcycle in traffic is like a mouse running through a herd of elephants. Be alert and ready to take quick evasive actions or you'll be crushed.

Here are a few tips you can use to drive safely:

- Always ride like you're not seen. Expect the most common accident – a car pulling out in front of you. Intersections, side streets and anything that obstructs view tells you to get ready to react.
- Be ready to react. Ease off the throttle, get your hands ready to brake/clutch, get your feet off the highway pegs and down where you can get at the controls and position yourself to respond quickly.

- React. Inability to react is where most failures occur and where better skills make a significant statistical difference.

Experienced riders as well as beginners have the opportunity to enroll in a rider's education course that suits your skills and abilities. You owe it to yourself and those that care about your well being to take advantage of one of the various courses offered.

Why do you need formal training? The Army CRC site contends that out of 1,100 accidents 92% of motorcyclists were either self taught or trained by family and friends. Formal training teaches you the critical skills you need to ride safely.

Professional courses will provide you with dynamic training based on case study trends that focus on real world traffic situations.



Maj. Peter Kitzhaber
Safety Officer



They found that wrecks at intersections usually occur when cars turn left into the path of a motorcyclist. The driver of the car is usually at fault however the motorcyclist is the one who suffers the most.

This is a perfect example of being "dead right".

You may not be at fault, but it doesn't matter, in a fight between a motorcycle and a larger vehicle, the motorcycle

(and rider) lose.

In addition they found that more than half of the riders who wrecked had less than five months experience on the motorcycle they were riding. Did you know the primary accident that does not involve another vehicle is riding through a curve?

story continued on next Page



story continued from previous Page

The Department of Defense (DoD) has mandated that all military personnel attend an approved motorcycle safety course whether or not they will be riding on a military installation. This can be found in DODI 6055.04.

Whether you are new to riding a motorcycle or have years of experience, take the extra time to prepare yourself for a safe and enjoyable ride.

Sign yourself up for a motorcycle training course to prepare yourself for the dangers on the roads and, most of all, drive safe.

THE END

IG CORNER

WE'RE ALMOST HOME, ARE YOU READY?

Now everything is going to be good. Or will it? We are done with our mission, and we get to go home. Change brings excitement, but it also brings stress. In my previous job, I was the Family Program Director.

I worked with many families and Soldiers that were going through a great deal of stress while reestablishing their families, jobs, and civilian life. I have heard many Soldiers comment that it was easier when they were deployed; now they are overwhelmed and stressed with all the changes in their lives.

To avoid chaos and overwhelming stress, there are many things Soldiers and families can do to capture that energy for positive results. Some things to consider:

Most Soldiers have had limited sensuality over the past year. A military environment does not lend itself to physical contact including hugging or any other physical contact. At home they may have had a pet that they could regularly pet or hold. After a year of a deployed environment absent of almost any sensuality, don't be surprised if physical contact seems to be unnatural.

Everybody changes: Soldiers, family and friends. Many want to pick up right where they left off, but that is not probable. It might be better, it might be worse, but be assured it will be different. Be prepared for change in focus, goals, maturity, experiences, priorities, and roles within a relationship.

Many Soldiers and family members worked hard to achieve goals over the past year. How will they continue and advance those goals? It might be physical, educational, financial, spiritual or other goals. Now with a different schedule, access to facilities

(lack of fitness facility or free access to the refrigerator), a set of new distractions, etc... Make plans on how to continue your hard work and efforts.

Budgets will certainly change. For almost everybody the amount of income will change and certainly the amount of expenditure will change. Reestablishing another insurance policy, cell phone plan, gasoline usage, and of course a little splurging after a year of limited freedoms. Some may still be seeking employment. One of the leading factors to relationship stress and suicide is financial problems. Be cognizant of budgets and lifestyle choices. Make your budget work for you; not you for your budget. And above all else communicate and plan.

Self worth and pride. For Soldiers, they have had a year of employment in a global environment. Many Soldiers feel a loss of pride as they return back to their job that once brought satisfaction, but now feel menial. Many family members took on additional responsibilities in the house and feel a great sense of accomplishment in these new roles. Be calculated in the transition of responsibility and ensure two-way communication in this transition. If you feel a lack of pride in your new role, consider volunteering for gratifying position in your community.



Maj. Daniel Hanson
MNBG E
Inspector General

continued on next Page

continued from previous Page

This transition back to civilian life can be great, but merely going home does not make that happen. The key to having a successful transition is establishing a good plan, remain flexible, and ensure perpetual communication. Both the loved ones in

the home front and deployed Soldier have sacrificed, worked hard, and changed. You can harness the energy from this change or you can ignore it. If you ignore it, be certain that it will force you to answer to it at some point. Be proactive and make this transition a positive one.

THE END

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

RELIGION BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

The Catholic community of Kosovo celebrated one of its main religious events on Aug. 15: the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to Heaven.

For Catholics, this dogma of the Faith was proclaimed on Nov. 1, 1950, by the then-regent Pope Pius XII. It states, basically, that Saint Mary was granted the grace and privilege of being bodily assumed into Heaven at the end of her earthly life.

However, although in the Western world this belief tends to be related to the Roman Catholic Church, it is also shared by all the Eastern Churches (Catholic and Orthodox alike) even if the theological and liturgical language they use to refer to it vary from one region to another.

On the occasion of the Assumption of Mary, a group of American soldiers joined those of other countries in a short pilgrimage to the Black Madonna Church, in the city of Letnica.

We grouped together about a mile and a half from the village, and from there proceeded to the pilgrimage site, which was hosting thousands of pilgrims.

They came from several countries in the Balkan region, and as far away as the United States.

The highlight of the day was the solemn celebration of the Holy Mass, presided by the local Catholic Bishop, and concelebrated by local priests and Catholic chaplains belonging to the multinational force present in Kosovo.

Not only were the clergy of the Catholic Church

present for the Holy Mass, but clergymen of the Serbian Orthodox Church were there as well.

However, of special interest was the presence of a number of Albanian Muslims. Followers of Islam venerate the figure of Mary, perhaps not as the "Mother of God," but still as the mother of the "prophet Jesus".

The mutual tolerance and respect among the different peoples in Letnica on that day was very obvious and heightened the beauty and depth of the celebration.



Chap. (Lt. Col.)
Alejandro Sanchez
MNBG E Chaplain



MNMG E Soldiers talk to local clergy while attending the celebration of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. (Courtesy photo)

I consider that the presence there of the representatives of diverse churches and religions to be a sign of hope for the country of Kosovo.

To begin with, the past conflicts here haven't had religious roots at the same deep level that conflicts elsewhere have experienced.

The fact that members of different communities in Kosovo can reach unity among themselves to honor

the same religious figure means that there is a great store of mutual good will in this country and the whole Balkans, something that we the members of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission can admire, foster, and share in.

THE END



One team emerged as champions during the Camp Bondsteel softball league's final tournament, Aug. 13-20, 2012. Task Force Aviation HHC's Rough Riders stumbled on the penultimate day of the tournament, but came back to win three consecutive games on the last day to claim the title.

Task Force MP's Bucketheads, who were the only team to win a game against the Rough Riders, came into the final day undefeated, but lost the last two games, settling for the silver medal.

"We were lucky today, we played well as a team today in the tournament," said Bill Ueckert, pitcher for the Rough Riders and the league commissioner. "I think the first game we kind of struggled with our bats, but after we got our bats going we did well during the tournament. Defensively we're a strong team."

"We kind of took a little beating on Saturday, which we weren't expecting," he continued. "It put us in the losers bracket, but we came back and won our games there, and eventually won."

The league consisted of 13 teams playing in a

round-robin format from May through August, along with three tournaments, including the championship.

"Our spring and summer have been a busy time for us, so this is our little getaway, our little paradise," said Kevin Hamilton, pitcher for the Bucketheads. "It was nice to get a group of guys, good friends together, that we work with and also play with. It was a great season and a great time together."

Ueckert agreed, "A lot of us like to play softball, it was fun, got everybody out of their rooms, we could enjoy each other's company, it was camaraderie."

Ueckert and Robert Starnes, Task Force LMT, were awarded the Army Achievement Medal for their work in organizing the league during a ceremony following the final game. But running the league required a lot more work than these two could provide.

"All these guys did a great job helping me, I couldn't have done it without them," said Ueckert.

THE END

story & photos by Spc. Joshua Barnett



ABOVE: Adam Kiepert sprints down the field during a game between the KFOR 15's Task Force MP and KFOR 16's Task Force Cash (Aviation) at Camp Bondsteel, Sept. 3, 2012. BELOW: Mike Miranda, Task Force Aviation, delivers a spike during the championship game between his Notorious DIG team and the Polish NSE. Flag football and volleyball tournaments were two of many activities held over Labor Day weekend for Multinational Battle Group East (MNBGE) Soldiers. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Joshua Barnett)

